



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) Required in the Shrimp Fishery of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico Small Entity Compliance Guide

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) has published a final rule requiring the use of bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery east of 85°30' W. longitude (east of Cape San Blas, Florida). This requirement applies to the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which includes all waters between 9 and 200 miles off the west coast of Florida.

Beginning **February 9, 2004**, a NOAA Fisheries-certified BRD must be installed in each net rigged for fishing aboard vessels trawling for shrimp in the eastern Gulf of Mexico EEZ. Trawl nets with a headrope length of 16 feet or less are exempt from this requirement.

A shrimp trawler fishing for royal red shrimp is exempt from the BRD requirement, as are vessels using rigid-frame roller trawls that are 16 feet or less in length. This requirement would complement existing federal regulations requiring the use of BRDs in the western Gulf of Mexico EEZ (west of Cape San Blas, Florida), as well as Florida regulations that

require the use of BRDs in their territorial waters. This compatibility of regulations throughout the Gulf of Mexico will ease enforcement issues.

BRDs approved for use in the eastern Gulf of Mexico EEZ include the "Fisheye," "Gulf Fisheye," "Jones-Davis," "Expanded Mesh" and "Extended Funnel." The "Extended Funnel" BRD is certified for use in Florida territorial waters, along with the "Florida Finfish Excluder" (equivalent to the NOAA Fisheries-certified "Gulf Fisheye").

This Small Entity Compliance Guide complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996. Any discrepancies between this document and the rule as published in the Federal Register will be resolved in favor of the Federal Register.

This and other news releases are available on the Southeast Regional Office homepage at <http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov/>. NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Department of Commerce.